

THE BUDDHIST

“*Sila Paññānato Jayam*”

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GLORIOUS CITIES THEN ARE NOW IN DESOLATE JUNGLE

CIVILISATIONS have come and gone, yielding place to new, leaving their traces behind. As in the present we live, so in the past our ancestors have lived. Our present is a flickering moment and is in fact inseparable from both the past into which it disappears, and the future from whence it arose and ascended. So what we call the past and future is purely an experience of the present, here and now, of a process of successive phenomenal happenings consisting solely of arisings and of ceasings, hard to see, hard to understand, subtle and profound—*Anicca*.

There is neither a subject either God or man, nor an object either world or nation that could out-live this natural law. So civilisations have come and gone, leaving a message, a trace of a path called a tradition. This tradition as is termed and understood is the accumulated culture of the thoughts, life, and living of our ancestors, left behind as an example of trial and error, for the living present either to follow, modify or ignore.

At one time when the Blessed One was dwelling at Jetavana in Savatthi, a certain Setthi with his son just seven years old came before the Exalted One, worshipped and said, “This child, wise and skilled in matters of true welfare, has asked me a question, about the doors leading to True Culture; and as I did not know I have come to your presence. Well shall it be if the Blessed One will answer this question.” “This same question,” the Blessed One answered was put to me by this child in the long past, and I answered it then. Now in the round of rebirths he has forgotten”; and after relating the story of the past, the Blessed One answered him in verse thus:—

“Seek Health, it is the greatest gain :

And virtue, elders’ guidance, learning seek :

Tread Dhamma’s Path, keep steadfast mind :

These six Doors lead to culture’s very Peak.”

Lord Buddha, with His Buddha’s eye, seeing the important part that Sri Lanka would play in moulding the life and living of its people, in accordance with the Dhamma, He preached, sanctified this land with His hallowed presence on three occasions, and the Holy places He visited are highly venerated, and to

G. R. NANAYAKKARA

this day are sacred places of regular worship by the people of Lanka. Ancient Lanka had been a pre-eminent Buddhist country, with a civilisation renowned as a land of pure Buddhist culture. After nearly 400 years of foreign rule and influence, the message left behind by our ancestors, has been forgotten, and the path they had tread is hidden out grown with jungle.

In the map of Ceylon if a straight line is drawn from South Hambantota to North Mannar, the Eastern section commonly known, as the dry zone, comprising of Northern, North-Central, Eastern and parts of North-Western and Southern Provinces of Ceylon, may roughly be taken as the area which had flourished during the period of ancient kings of Lanka. This section of Ceylon which had been once the home of myriads, now covered with jungle is the home of the denizens of the forest. The achievements of both kings and its people, indicative of their efforts their thoughts, life and living, how they fought mother nature, to their benefit and profit are in this section of Ceylon, either buried or hidden.

It is here where the surveyor has come to play a very useful and important part

in bringing these hidden and buried treasures to light for the information of the historian and the archaeologist. The surveyor has spared no pains in penetrating to these wild, elephant and bear infested jungles in their anxious search for all available traces of the dead past is evinced by the vast amount of existing ruins of Buddha images, Dagobas, Viharas, Colossal Tanks, Yodiela bunds, net work of irrigation channels, anicuts, dams, rock caves and temples, swallowed up by forest and buried by a vast leafy grave, depicted in the one inch topographical maps of this area.

The two great cities of Ancient Lanka, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa are now a desolate mass of ruins scattered all over within what appears to be scientifically well-planned cities. The ruins are mostly massive Dagobas, Buddha edifices, shrines, temples and monasteries with tanks and baths well distributed.

These two ancient cities are situated in the heart of the dry zone, and have been so designed by purpose as the bulk of the population lived in this dry zone of ancient Lanka. This dry zone is very well suited for the cultivation of paddy, but due to lack of rain, artificial methods of conserving and distribution of water had to be resorted to. This gives us the reason why the ancient kings selected Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa as their capitals, from where they started, their useful and profitable campaigns of development of the country, by educating the masses in the pursuit of agriculture and helping them by all possible means, in their creative effort in the construction of tanks, dams, anicuts, yodielas and distributary channels, for the benefit, for the profit and for the glory of the ancient peoples of mother Lanka.

“Rice is the immortal nourishing child of Heaven and this meaneth life.” “Kings thought and took counsel with their officers of state largely in terms of food. Hence came the wonderful ancient

system of tanks—great reservoirs in which the water was stored up and then distributed by channels to the thirsting sunbaked rice fields. For rice was life; without rice famine—death.”

From the North of Anuradhapura to the South as far as Tissamaharama had been one immense stretch of gorgeous paddy field. If we look at the one-inch topographical maps of this dry zone, we could see the numerous monumental tanks, both big and small, scattered and well distributed, now breached and in jungle, connected by a net work of smaller ones, the bigger feeding the smaller, by yodielas and irrigation channels, and we cannot but be awe struck with feelings of emotional wonder at the creative effort of the ancient people of Lanka.

When we come down from the capital cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa reading these one-inch maps carefully with an understanding eye, passing the numerous tanks and channels both big and small, in a south-easterly direction one will not fail to find, another important aspect of the life of the ancient people of Lanka. This aspect is shown particularly in the area we now call the Game Sanctuary and its surroundings, by the presence of numerous rock caves and temples.

These findings as depicted in the one-inch topographical maps, when correlated to the records of ancient Lanka as given in the Mahāwansa, will give us a picture of the life, thoughts and actions of our ancestors. This I suppose is what we understand as culture of a people. Mahāwansa tells us of just one aspect of the influence of Buddhism on the thoughts of the ancient kings and his people, no mention being made on the secular side as unimportant. The one-inch topographical maps has revealed to us, in the absence of any written record, their actions. When we put these two together, we find that Religion and Agriculture have been the two main functions of their daily life. Our ancient people have been great realists, in that they have truly understood, what a purposeful existence is. Food, sustenance, a place of shelter, knowledge, and seeking after wisdom are the realities of life. That our ancestors had based their life and living on this Reality, is amply proved, firstly by the absence of any mention of their secular life in the Mahāwansa and secondly, by the absence of any architectural remains such as palaces and mansions.

Thus in fact they had understood, the significance of the Three Phenomenal Characteristics of Man and World—Anicca, Dukka, Anatta; on the foundation of which Buddha Dhamma is based,

up on which, in turn the life and living of a Buddhist rests. Ceylon is not what it had been during the centuries of the dead past; what had been glorious cities then are now in desolate jungle. But in spite of this change, the spirits have endured and we see thousands flocking in pilgrimage every season for a visual satisfaction, some little inspiration. The ancients went further still and considered that this worldly life is not an end in itself, but a means to a higher end and cultivation of virtue was the main feature in their personal life. In this practice of virtue they became a well-disciplined people, who had proper control of the urges and impulses of the flesh, leading a desireless, selfless life. There were a class who had gone further still, renounced everything worldly, became monks and retiring into solitary caves, meditated in search of True Wisdom. We read in Mahāwansa that kings, when in trouble by foreign invaders, have fled from their capitals to distant Ruhuna, in search of wise counsel. Those kings have gone to one or more of these solitary caves for counsel and advice from the solitary and meditative monks. Then collected armies from not far distant Magam and successfully fought their battles, and thus ruled wisely for the good and for the profit of his people.

Of these numerous cave habitations, Situlpahuwa is one of historical importance. Referring to Situlpahuwa it reminds me of an incident written by Dr. Cassius Pereira (now Bhikkhu Kassapa), who had visited this place some years ago, in the company of some foreign Bhikkhu. Access to one of the top-most caves of this rock is by a very narrow passage, on a steep incline bordering the sharp edge of a perpendicular rock in space. With a severe wind blowing across the rock, to walk along this passage is a very nerve breaking affair and should be attempted with great circumspection. While going along the narrow passage, a silk handkerchief belonging to the Bhikkhu was suddenly carried away by the wind. After their visit inspection of the cave, they were returning by the same passage and at the identical place where the wind carried away the handkerchief, the same wind blew across them bringing with it the handkerchief into the hands of the Bhikkhu. Whether this was a mere accident or otherwise is difficult to say. Many sportsman who are regular visitors to this area have confessed, that there is some unexplainable impulse that prompts them to repeat their visits to this sanctuary not so much for the pleasure of hunting game, but for a few days of mental tranquillity in this atmosphere of peaceful calmness, away from the turmoil of an ordinary life. I am indebted to me

of King Devanampiyatissa, who went hunting after deer at Mihintale and heard Wisdom instead, from the lips of Thera Mahinda, after which incident and date, our ancient culture commenced. But there is no such illustrious personage here except abandoned caves which had been the habitats of dead monks who had lived and meditated and radiated their loving kindness all around them. And for no plausible reason that I could scientifically explain, I call this Game Sanctuary and its surrounds a living sanctuary of wisdom.

With the passage of time the modern Ceylon has drifted far away from that Cultural Heritage, left behind by our ancestors of Ancient Lanka. Just as much that ancient Lanka is in jungle, the culture of modern Ceylon, which permeates in the minds of its people is now much clouded with dust. The reason for this is not far to seek. With the increase of our sensual opposites, seeking after the pleasures of the senses, we have drifted away from the Reality of Life—as a means to a Higher end. This change of our values of life and living is a direct result of our impact with the material culture of the West, and due to this perversion, think that ours is the most advanced of all past civilisations, and in our conceit, boast that we are the most advanced people that ever lived.

BUDDHIST ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH INDIA

AT a meeting of the Maha Bodhi Society held at Dharmapala Mandir, Egmore, Madras, on Sunday, January 8th, 1950, Rastra Bhasa Visharada Nilwakke Somananda Nayaka Sthavira, Bhikkhu in charge of the Madras Buddhist Centre, delivered a speech on the “Essence of Buddhism.”

Speaking in English, he said:—“Buddhism, or as it is known among its followers, Saddharma, is the religion preached by Buddhas. A Buddha is one who has attained Bodhi. By Bodhi is meant an ideal state of intellectual and ethical perfection, which can be attained by man by purely human means. There were many Buddhas namely Deepankara, Kondanna, Sumana, etc. Of all the Buddhas one best-known to history is Gautama Sakyamuni.” He gave the summary of the teachings of the Buddha as follows:—“Abstention from all evils, performance of meritorious deeds, complete purification and control of the mind.”

Speaking further, Somananda Nayake Thera, said that a brief account of Theravada Buddhism could be had by reading “Visuddhi Magga” of Buddha Ghosa, and of Mahāyāna Buddhism, “The Essence of Buddhism” by Prof. Lakshmi Narasu.

For the benefit of the Tamil audience he gave the essence of the speech in Tamil also.

The Rev. U. Dhammajoti, of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, also addressed the gathering.—Cor.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN ORIGINAL AND DEVELOPED BUDDHISM

SRAMANERA SANGHARAKSHITA

THE chief distinction between philosophy and all other branches of knowledge is generally considered to be twofold, namely, a difference of method and a difference of scope. The method of philosophy is said to be different from the methods of the various sciences inasmuch as it brings its investigations without assumptions or preconceptions of any kind. The sciences, on the contrary, all assume the truth of the law of causation. In addition to this each science makes certain assumptions within its own special field of enquiry.

Physics, for instance, assumes the existence of matter, Biology the existence of life, and Geometry the existence of space. But they do not consider what matter, life and space in themselves really are, or why they should exist at all. To consider that is the business of philosophy which, it is claimed, makes no assumptions whatsoever. But one assumption at least philosophy does in fact make: that knowledge is possible. Even the investigation into the possibility of knowledge implies that knowledge of whether knowledge is possible or not is possible. Philosophy cannot avoid the assumption of the possibility of knowledge, since even the initial act of philosophizing presupposes it. Similarly, religion is based upon the assumption that it is possible to become good, which implies in the first place the freedom of the will and in the second the existence of a goal, whether proximate or ultimate, to be attained.

ESSENTIALLY SYNOPTIC

Difference of method does not, therefore, distinguish philosophy either from the sciences on the one hand or from religion on the other. But difference of scope, content or subject-matter does in fact distinguish it from both of them. The various sciences are so obviously restricted to their respective fields of investigation that it is unnecessary to give examples in order to prove it. Religion restricts itself to the attainment of the Highest Good and considers other things only insofar as they help or hinder this supreme desideratum. But philosophy, on the contrary, is essentially synoptic, and endeavours to comprehend the whole of existence at a single glance, thereby justifying Plato's famous definition of the philosopher as "the spectator

of all time and all existence." Philosophy does not, however, simply view things as a mere aggregate of heterogeneous elements; but, just as the scientist and spiritualist do within their narrower spheres, it endeavours to trace the unity of law working in the midst of the diversity of events, and since its sphere is universal the law or laws which it seeks to trace are universal too.

The claim that the Buddha was a philosopher as well as a Saint, and that Original Buddhism was therefore a philosophy as well as a religion, must consequently rest upon the ability of the most ancient records to show statements attributed to Him about the nature of existence as a whole. The representatives of the Theravada tradition generally consider that the Buddha did in fact characterize the whole of existence as dukkhā, aniccā and anattā, which means that it is either actually or potentially painful, transitory, and without any permanent, unchanging soul or self. The first and second signs or signata, namely, dukkhā and aniccā, obviously cannot be applied to Nibbāna, which is characterized as paramam sukham and nicea or dhuva. This leaves us with anattā only. But a purely negative characterization of existence as a whole is clearly not a very adequate foundation for a philosophical superstructure. The difficulty is, however, more apparent than real.

CLEAR ANALYSIS

An analysis of the implications of the doctrine of Anattā will eventually make it plain that it is merely a condensed and negative statement of what appears in an expanded and positive form in the doctrine of Paticca Samuppāda. That this doctrine is nothing but the conceptualized formulation of the Buddha's supreme spiritual experience and that it may therefore be regarded as His view of existence as a whole becomes clear when we consider that it was just this doctrine that He debated within Himself whether to make known to the world or not immediately after His Enlightenment. The Mahāvagga of the Vinaya Pitaka relates (Oldenburg's *Buddha*, page 120):

"Into the mind of the Exalted One, while he tarried, retired in solitude, came this thought: 'I have penetrated this deep truth, which is difficult to perceive, difficult to understand, giving, noble, difficult to attain, sublime, great, and all thought,

deeply-significant, which only the wise can grasp. Man moves in an earthly sphere, in an earthly sphere he has his place and finds his enjoyment. For man, who moves in an earthly sphere, and has his place and finds his enjoyment in an earthly sphere, it will be very difficult to grasp this matter, the law of causality, the chain of causes and effects: and this also will be very difficult for him to grasp, the extinction of all conformations, the withdrawal from all that is earthly, the extinction of desire, the cessation of longing, the end, the Nirvāna. Should I now preach the Doctrine and mankind not understand me, it would bring me nothing but fatigue, it would cause me nothing but trouble! And there passed unceasingly through the mind of the Exalted One, this voice, which no one had ever before heard.

"Why reveal to the world what I have won by a severe struggle?"

The truth remains hidden from him whom desire and hate absorb.

It is difficult, mysterious, deep, hidden from the coarse mind;

He cannot apprehend it, whose mind earthly vocations surround with might."

"When the Exalted One thought thus, his heart was inclined to abide in quietude and not to proclaim the Doctrine." (*Mahāvagga*, 1. 5. 2 seq.)

This important text, embedded in what is undoubtedly one of the oldest strata of the Pāli Tipitaka, makes it quite clear that the doctrine of Paticca Samuppāda is the conceptualized formulation of the content of the Buddha's experience of Sambodhi and that it may therefore be considered as the philosophical foundation not only of Original Buddhism but of the subsequently-arising schools of Developed Buddhism also.

IN ONE VERSE

It was this doctrine which the venerable Assaji skilfully summarized in a single verse when questioned by Sariputta (then a wandering mendicant of another sect) concerning the teaching of the Buddha—a verse which has since then been recognized as containing the pith and kernel of Buddhism: "Existences which flow from a cause, their cause the Perfect One teaches, and how they end: this is the doctrine of the great Samana." The passage in the

Tipitaka which relates this episode is in turn, as Oldenburg (*Buddha*, page 134, note) says "... one of those which king Asoka, in the Bhairāt inscription (circ. 260 B.C.), commanded the monks and nuns, the lay-brothers and lay-sisters, intently to hear and learn." It is pointed out in later scholastic literature that the Four Ariyan Truths can be divided into two parts, each of which will comprize one cause and one effect, that is to say, dukkhā (the First Truth) and its cause, tanhā (the Second Truth), and Nibbāna (the Third Truth) and its cause, the Ariyan Eightfold Path (the Fourth Truth). It is hardly necessary to multiply examples of the prime importance of the doctrine of Paticca Samuppāda from the Pāli Tipitaka. The Mādhyamikavāda's doctrine of Sūnyatā is simply a dialectical version of the doctrine of Anattā or Paticca Samuppāda. This will be clearly seen when we go a little more deeply into the meaning of the Buddha's fundamental philosophical doctrine.

The importance of the tenet of Dependent Origination in the teaching of the Vijnānavāda or Yogācāra school of Buddhism is sufficiently attested by the fact that at the beginning of his encyclopaedic philosophical treatise the *Tattvasaṅgraha Sāntarakṣita* (705-762 C.E.), the co-founder with Padmasambhāva of the Tantric Buddhism in Tibet and one of the most brilliant ornaments of the great University of Nalanda, not only salutes the Buddha as the Teacher of the Doctrine of Dependent Origination but makes it the vehicle both of his examination of all other schools of Indian philosophy and his exposition of the doctrines of the Vijnānavāda school of Mahāyāna Buddhism to which he belonged. In this announcing this doctrine as the basic principle of Buddhist philosophy Sāntarakṣita has simply adumbrated the view of all earlier Buddhist thinkers from the time of the Buddha Himself down to his own day.

NOTHING IS ALOOF

The negative doctrine of Anattā teaches that all phenomena of existence whatsoever are without self-nature or substantiality and that they are, therefore, conditioned or contingent in character. Everything depends for its existence upon other things, and so on until all the threads of existence—physical, mental, moral and spiritual—are knit together into a single interrelated, interconnected, interdependent fabric. Nothing is aloof or single, nothing isolated, nothing separate. A flower blooms in dependence on the whole universe, and the whole universe exists in dependence on the flower. In the words of Shelley :

" Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle..."

The transition from the doctrine of Anattā, which is the negative aspect of Paticca Samuppāda, to the doctrine of universal Flux or becoming, which is its positive expression, is perhaps best made by pointing out that it is impossible, in a universe wherein each part exists only in dependence on every other part, for one thing to be in a state of flux or becoming without every other thing being at the same time in such a state. If even one phenomenon was static and unchanging, all other phenomena would be static and unchanging too. The assertion that the universe is unchanging, that it is what William James would call a "block-universe," or the belief that Reality is a static somewhat, is therefore sufficiently disproved by the discovery of even one phenomenon in a state of flux or becoming. This discovery is of course one which is made daily in empirical experience.

The position that Reality is permanent and unchanging and that it only appears to change is logically indefensible, and ultimately results in a dualism between the world of appearance and the world of Reality which can be overcome only by denying the existence of the world of appearance altogether. This denial was actually made by Parmenides and Plato in Greece, and by Gaudapāda and Sankara in India. The logical consequence of such a position is the theory of Māyā which, instead of solving the difficulty, helps to make it worse. For it is impossible to explain how the unreal originates from the real, the imperfect from the perfect, the dynamic from the static, Māyā from Brahman, without admitting that the former was present potentially in the latter, which is tantamount to admitting that Reality is partially unreal, partially imperfect, etc. Even to deny the origination of Māyā from Brahman, as the Ajātavada of Gaudapāda does, is not sufficient to solve the problem, since it fails to explain why, granting that Māyā does not originate, it nevertheless even appears to originate. And if Māyā is held to exist or to appear to exist, but not to originate from Brahman, the result is simply a duplication of the old Sāṅkhyan Puruṣa-Prakṛiti dualism with all its attendant perplexities. This and numerous other difficulties which are involved in such fallacious statements as "It changes in appearance but not in Reality" can be avoided only by viewing the whole of Reality as one single grand Becoming, which is not simply the aggregate but the at-one-ment, the concrete unity of all "individual" beings.

IT IS A PROTEST

Just as the Buddha's doctrine of Paticca Samuppāda is, historically speaking, a protest against the static Atman-Brahman conception of certain Upanishadic thinkers, Heraclitus' doctrine of "everything flows" (*panta rhei*) is a protest against the abstract Being of the Eleatic philosophers. It is therefore hardly surprising to find the teaching of the great Ephesian philosopher can serve equally well as an exposition of at least a part of the teaching of his even greater Indian contemporary. Prof. W. T. Stace writes :

"Not only do things change from moment to moment. Even in one and the same moment they are and are not the same. It is not merely that a thing first is, and then a moment afterwards, is not. It both is and is not at the same time. The at-oneness of "is" and "is-not" is the meaning of Becoming. We shall understand this better if we contrast it better with the Eleatic principle. The Eleatics described all things under two concepts, Being and not-being. Being has, for them, all truth, all reality. Not-being is wholly false and illusory. For Heraclitus both Being and not-being are equally real. The one is as true as the other. Both are true, for both are identical. Becoming is the identity of Being and not-being. For becoming has only two forms, namely, the arising of things and their passing away, their beginning and their end, their origination and decease. Perhaps you may think that this is not correct, that there are other forms of change besides origination and decease. A man is born. That is his origination. He dies. That is his decease. Between his birth and his death there are intermediate changes. He grows larger, grows older, grows wiser or more foolish, his hair turns grey. So also the leaf of a tree does not merely come into being and pass out of being. It changes in shape, form, colour. From light green it becomes dark green, and from dark green, yellow. But there is after all nothing in all this except origination and decease, not of the thing itself, but of its qualities. The change from green to yellow is the decease of green colour, the origination of yellow colour. Origination is the passage of not-being into Being. Decease is the passage of Being into not-being. Becoming, then, has in it only the two factors of Being and not-being, and it means the passing of one into the other. But this passage does not mean, for Heraclitus, that at one moment there is Being, and at the next moment not-being. It means that Being and not-being are in everything

at one and the same time. Being is not-being. Being has not-being in it." (*A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, London, 1946, pp. 74-76).

Both Heraclitus and the Buddha are able, unlike the Eleatics and Advaitists, to view the whole of existence as governed by one principle, the principle of Becoming. And since they considered events to be *intrinsically* dynamic it was not necessary for them to violate the unity of their conception by introducing some secondary principle in order to account for the origin of motion, change or becoming. Existence and becoming are convertible terms. To exist means to become.

CRITICAL PHILOSOPHER

That the Buddha was not only a philosopher but even a critical philosopher is demonstrated by the masterly fashion in which He handled the various sophisms of His day. It is an easy matter to declare that one's opponents are wrong; but it is difficult to point out not only where but why they are wrong. It is still more difficult to make a scientific classification not only of all extant but indeed of all possible philosophical points of view in accordance with a single schematic principle. Most difficult of all is it to deduce such a principle from one's own tenets. Yet the Buddha has done all these things. In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* He has classified sixty-two schools of philosophers into two groups, the first comprising those who maintain the doctrine of Eternalism (*sassatavāda*), the second those who maintain the doctrine of Annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*). A moment's reflection will show that the first group of doctrines identifies Reality with abstract Being, while the second group identifies it with equally abstract not-being.

The Buddha and Heraclitus, on the other hand, identify it with Becoming, which is the concrete unity or at-onement of Being and not-being. The sixty-two views so classified are consequently all one-sided, and therefore mutually antagonistic. They see only a portion of the Truth, and thus their author's are not philosophers in the sense of Plato's definition of the term, or at least not successful philosophers. But the Buddha's doctrine of Reality as Becoming enabled Him to take a thoroughly synoptic view of existence and thus to propound a system of thought which is truly philosophical. The *Mādhyamika* school of Developed Buddhism is so called by its adherents simply because their doctrine of *Sūnyatā* follows a Middle Path between the two extreme views of Eternalism and Annihilationism.

BEAUTIFUL PARABLE

The Buddha's beautiful Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant is intended to illustrate not the popular but indolent doctrine that all religions and philosophies mean the same thing, but the essentially synoptic character of the Buddha-thought in comparison with the one-sided and mutually contradictory statements of the unenlightened sectarians. (cf. B. M. Barua, *Prolegomena to a History of Buddhist Philosophy*, Calcutta, 1918, page 8). Just as the king in the parable was not only able to see that the blind men were all partly right and partly wrong, but also why they were so, and to what extent, the Buddha was not only able to declare that the sectarian thinkers were partly correct in their conclusions and partly incorrect, but to indicate in addition the source and scope of their mistakes. He may therefore with justice be designated as the first critical philosopher in the history of human thought.

Since the philosophy of the Buddha equates Reality and Becoming we must conclude that whatever is real also becomes. This raises the problem of whether the Highest Good aimed at by religion is something which becomes or, more accurately, whether it *is* a becoming. The same problem is stated in terms of Buddhist thought as: Does *Paticca Samuppāda* include *Nibbāna*? The question is important, for upon the nature of the answer depends the status of Buddhism as a philosophy. Many people, even those who were brought up under the beneficent influence of the Buddhist tradition and who profess to follow it, will be found to hesitate before giving an answer to this question. Some may even think that the conception of *Nibbāna* as becoming is a plain contradiction in terms.

Yet the Buddha has undoubtedly identified Reality with Becoming, and the assertion that Becoming does not include *Nibbāna* therefore means either that *Nibbāna* is not real, which is impossible, or that Becoming does not exhaust the whole of Reality, which implies that the Buddha was not a philosopher, since He did not view existence as a whole and was therefore unable to make any statement about it as such. The acceptance of the latter alternative would compel us to believe that the Buddha was like the one-sided sectarians of His own parable. Buddhism would then be without any philosophical foundation. The whole edifice of the religion would be in imminent danger of collapse.

ASKED AND ANSWERED

Fortunately the question has already been asked and answered by a

great scholar who is at the same time undoubtedly the most brilliant Buddhist thinker of modern India, the late Dr. Beni Madhab Barua. In his *Donna Alpine Ratnayake Trust* lecture on Buddhism as Personal Religion Dr. Barua asks "...whether or no, the abiding order of cosmic life which is expressed by Buddha's casual genesis is an all-inclusive reality? If so, does it or does it not include *Nirvāna* in it? If it precludes *Nirvāna* or any other element of experience, material, mental, moral or spiritual, it cannot be an all-inclusive reality. Further, if it is not all-inclusive, it does not deserve the name of reality at all. To be reality it must be not only the fact but the whole of the fact, known or knowable, actual or potential." pp. 7-8).

Having stated the problem with such force and clarity the speaker goes on to point out that it created a puzzle and difficulty in the Buddha's personal religion, and divided the Buddhist teachers into two sharply antagonistic schools of opinion, one of which maintained that since *Nibbāna* represented the counter-process of cessation it was logically excluded from the *Paticca Samuppāda* which represents the process of becoming. Dr. Barua adds that the great Theravada scholastic *Buddhaghosa* has discussed the question and sought to maintain, on textual and other grounds, that both the process of becoming and the counter-process of cessation are comprehended in the law of *Paticca Samuppāda* as formulated by the Buddha. But he observes that *Buddhaghosa* did not grasp the logical or metaphysical difficulty involved in the matter, and contends that in order to do justice to what he considers are the two central points in the Buddha's personal religion, namely *Paticca Samuppāda* and *Nibbāna*, we must be absolutely clear on the logical relation between them.

"The most welcome light on this point comes from the intellectually gifted early Buddhist sister *Dhammadinnā* whose views were fully approved and endorsed by the Buddha with the remark that he had nothing further to add to them. As interpreted by her, Buddha's Causal Genesis admits of two different trends of things in the whole reality. In one of them the reaction (*paṭibhāga*) takes place in a cyclical order between two opposites (*paccanikas*), such as pleasure and pain (*sukha-dukkha*), virtue and vice (*puññāpāpa*), good and evil (*kusala-akusala*).

This is aptly termed by *Buddhaghosa* as *visabhāga-paṭibhāgas*. In the other, the reaction takes place in a progressive order between two counter-parts or complements or between two

things of the same genus the succeeding factor augmenting the effect of the preceding one. This is what Buddhaghosa terms *sadisa-paṭibhāga*. By the term "world," as distinguished from Nirvāṇa, we are to understand the first trend in the Causal Genesis where we revolve within the cycle of reaction between the opposites. *Nirvāṇa* represents the other trend in the Causal Genesis in which the course of reaction lies from strength to strength, good to further good, from that to still greater good, from pleasure to joy, from joy to gladness, from gladness to happiness, from happiness to bliss, from bliss to be attitude, from intuitional knowledge (*viññā*) to the feeling of emancipation (*vimutti*), from that to self-mastery (*vasibhāva*) or self-consciousness as to the acquisition of the free state, and from that to the fullest enjoyment of the bliss of Nirvāṇa.

In reply to the question as to what follows by way of reaction from *Nirvāṇa* Dhammadinnā wisely said that *Nirvāṇa* was generally regarded as the final step of the process in order to avoid an infinite regress,—for the sake of *pariyantagahanam* in her own language. But she has not failed to indicate that even there be any further reaction, that also takes place in the line and whatever follows therefrom will also appertain to *Nirvāṇa* and, therefore, will partake of its nature." (Ibid., pp. 8-9).

SANSĀRA AND NIBBANA

This explanation appears to be the correct one. By tracing the logical connection between Sansāra and Nibbāna it vindicates the doctrine that Reality is Becoming and thus establishes Buddhism on a sound philosophical basis. Its correctness is moreover confirmed by the history of the development of the philosophical schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism. That all-comprehending Reality which appears in the Original Buddhism of the Founder as *Paticea Samuppāda* is later on designated as *Sūnyatā* by Nāgārjuna and the Mādhyamikavādins, as *Vijnāna* by Asanga, Vasubandhu and the Vijnānavādins, and as *Ālayavijnāna* by Asvaghosha and his followers. This testifies to the continuity and fundamental unity of all schools of Buddhist philosophy. The differences between them are to a large extent differences of method and approach rather than differences of belief.

Only in the light of this conviction is it possible to regard the development of Buddhist philosophy as an intelligible process of organic growth instead of as a bewildering succession of conflicting doctrines and mutually exclusive creeds. The continuity of Buddhist thought throughout the ages is further

exemplified when we pass from the views of Nāgārjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu and Asvaghosha on the nature of Reality to their views on the logical connection between the two principal trends therein. For here, too, they follow faithfully, but intelligently, in the footsteps of the Buddha and Dhammadinnā.

UNRESTRICTEDNESS

In the Mādhyamika philosophy of Nāgārjuna Reality-Becoming-Pratitya-samutpāda-Sūnyatā. The Mādhyamika Sāstra says (Chapter XXIV, Kārika 14), according to Kumarajiva's interpretation, that "It is on account of Sūnyatā or unrestrictedness that everything becomes possible; without it, nothing in this world is possible." Āryadeva, commenting on this Kārika, remarks "It is due to absolute unrestrictedness that the activity, in regular order (following the law of regularity, and of cause and effect), of all mundane and supermundane things (dharmas) is possible. If it (noumenon) is otherwise, then such activity would become impossible." This is what the Mādhyamika school calls *Asanskrita-sūnyatā* (emptiness of the incomposite).

It corresponds with what Buddhaghosa terms *sadisa-paṭibhāga* or "reaction in a progressive order between two counterparts or complements or between two things of the same genus the succeeding factor augmenting the effect of the preceding one." The Mādhyamika Sāstra also says (Chapter XXIV, Kārikas 18 and 19) "That which has been produced through causes and conditions we say to be 'ever-changing'; it is a conventional name, and may also be called 'the middle path.' There is no *dharma* which is not produced by causes and conditions. Therefore no *dharma* exists which can be called not ever-changing or *āsūnya*." Āryadeva explains this verse to mean "I say that whatever is produced by cause and condition is *sūnyatā* or ever-changing, because whatever is the outcome of the union of various causes and conditions is limited by the law of causation. Hence those that are devoid of any particularly or *svabhāva* are *sūnyatā*." This is what Nāgārjuna and his disciples call *Sanskrita-sūnyatā* (emptiness of the composite). It corresponds with what Buddhaghosa terms *visaṅhāga-paṭibhāgas* or reaction in a cyclic order between opposites. Yamakami Sogen, from whose invaluable work *Systems of Buddhist Thought* (Calcutta, 1912, pp. 195-196) the above quotations have all been taken, observes that "The conception of *Sūnyatā* in the Mādhyamika philosophy goes beyond the development from the *Sanskrita* and *Asanskrita* points of view; for these are but relative terms, as the great Nāgārjuna

has pointed out in his *Drāḍāsa-nikāya-sāstra*, an authoritative work on this school. "The two *dharmas* of *Sanskrita* and *Asanskrita* are of relative existence. The existence of the latter depends on that of the former, and on account of their relative existence, all things are *sūnyatā*." Transcendental truth cannot be expressed by any of these terms, it is technically called *ālamba sūnyatā*." Ibid., p. 197). We may therefore say that Becoming—(*ālambana*) *Sūnyatā*, 'cyclic becoming'—*Sanskrita-sūnyatā* and 'progressive becoming'—*Asanskrita-sūnyatā*. This triple equation demonstrates the substantial unity of Nāgārjuna's thought with that of the Buddha and Dhammadinnā.

NO DIVERGENCE

If the point of view of the Mādhyamika philosophy is metaphysical and its method dialectical, the point of view of the Vijnānavāda philosophy may be said to be epistemological and its method psychological (hence the alternative designation as *Yogācāra* which attaches to this school). There is, however, no fundamental doctrinal divergence of any kind between them. That which from the special point of view adopted by Nāgārjuna and his followers appears as *Sūnyatā* appears, from that adopted by the brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu and their followers, as *Mano*, *Citta* or *Vijnāna* (each of which terms has, however, a particular as well as a universal extension in their system). The filiation of this pan-psychic approach is thought by some to be to the famous first verse of the *Dhammapada* (*manopubbangamā dhammā*, etc.) as well as to several other less well-known passages of the Pāli Canon. Concerning this *Mano*, *Citta* or *Vijnāna*, the Chinese version of the *Mahāyāna-sūtra-alankāra-sāstra* says (Chapter XI, verse 34) "Cittam has a twofold reflection. It is fond of greed and the like which are one set of reflections; similarly, it is fond of faith and the like which are the other set of reflections. The moral and immoral *dharma* does not exist apart from it (i.e. *Cittam*)." (*Systems of Buddhist Thought*, p. 212). Yamakami Sogen goes on to explain that pleasure and pain, good conduct and bad, ignorance and enlightenment, are merely the actualizations of potential seeds stored in the *Ālaya-vijnāna* or *Storehouse-consciousness*.

These seeds are those of defilement (*sāsrava-bīja*) and those of purity (*anāsra-va-bīja*). The former, he says, comprises the first two principles of the 'Four Noble Truths,' that is to say, *Dukkha-satya* and *Samudaya-satya*; while the latter represents the last two truths, namely, *Nirodha-satya* and *Marga-satya*. These are in turn equated with *Pravritti* or outward-circling and *Nivritti*

or inward-circling dharmas respectively. Yamakami Sogen sums up the position of this school in the words "Thus we see that, in the *Ālaya-vijñāna*, there is stored a twofold seed from which springs up *saṃsāra* and *Nirvāṇa*." (Ibid., p. 213). Similarly, Dr. Beni Madhab Barua says "If such be the correct interpretation of the philosophical position of Buddha's Causal Genesis both *saṃsāra* and *Nirvāṇa* may be consistently shown to be possibilities in one and the same reality." (*Buddhism as Personal Religion*, p. 9).

TWO QUOTATIONS

The position of Asvaghosha and his school will be sufficiently indicated by the following two quotations. In both of them the word *Citta* has, unfortunately, been rendered by the misleading term 'soul,' the connotation of which is thoroughly un-Buddhistic. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta says: "He held that in the soul two aspects may be distinguished—the aspect as thatness (*bhūtatatātā*) and the aspect as the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*) . . . The soul as birth and death (*saṃsāra*) comes forth from the Tathāgata womb (*tathāgatararbha*), the ultimate reality. But the immortal and the mortal coincide with each other. Though they are not identical they are not duality either. Thus when the absolute soul assumes a relative aspect by its self-affirmation it is called the all-conserving mind (*ālaya-vijñāna*). It embraces two principles, (1) enlightenment, (2) non-enlightenment." *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1922, Vol. I, pp. 130 and 131. See also *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, Chapter VII). The equation of these terms with those used by the Buddha and Dhammadiṇṇā on the one hand, and with those employed by Nāgārjuna, Asanga and Vasubandhu on the other, will easily be made by anyone who has read the two previous paragraphs attentively. It is an additional illustration of the "unity in diversity" of the sublimest Buddhist thought.

We are thus able to see the close logical connection which exists between philosophy and religion, not only in the Original Buddhism of the Buddha and Dhammadiṇṇā, but in the Developed Buddhism of Nāgārjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu and Asvaghosha as well. The religious doctrines and spiritual practices of Buddhism rest not on the stubble of blind belief or the shifting sands of idle speculation, but on the adamant foundation of philosophic truth. Buddhism as a religion stands firm-rooted in philosophy, and Buddhism as a philosophy stands bearing religion as its finest fruit. But it must be borne in mind that this view of Buddhism as simultaneously philosophy and religion would not have been possible had we agreed to exclude *Nirvāṇa* from

the process of Dependent Origination. For such an exclusion would necessarily have degraded *Paticca Samuppāda* from the lofty status of an all-comprehending Reality to the comparatively mean position of a merely phenomenal law. This would be equivalent to admitting firstly that the Buddha was not a philosopher, that He did not have, or did not admit to His followers that He had, any synoptic view of existence as a whole, empirical and transcendental, phenomenal and noumenal, and secondly that Buddhism is not a philosophy but only a religion, and a religion without a foundation, too. If, on the other hand, we accept the explanation of *Nirvāṇa* as representing merely the counter-process of cessation within *Paticca Samuppāda* we are compelled to view the whole religious life and career as an exclusively negative process. This unmitigated negativism is not only out of harmony with our truest spiritual needs but stands in flat contradiction to several important passages in the Pāli Canon, to say nothing of the innumerable Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese texts of Developed Buddhism. The only way out of both difficulties, the only ground we have for considering Buddhism as a philosophy as well as a religion, as a positive rather than as a negative gospel, is the view that Reality-Becoming-*Paticca Samuppāda*, and that *saṃsāra* and *Nirvāṇa* represent the trend of reaction between opposites and the trend of reaction between counterparts respectively therein.

"If such be the correct interpretation of the philosophical position of Buddha's Causal Genesis both *saṃsāra* and *Nirvāṇa* may be consistently shown to be included in it, both as possibilities in one and the same reality. That this was the exact position may be realized from the fact that the entire mode or method of religious training which was the outcome of Buddha's personal religion was based upon the second trend, the second line of reaction implying the procession from good to greater good, from the wholesome to more wholesome. The rotatory play or strife between the opposites is restricted to the *Kāma* or non-Jhānic, non-reflective sphere of consciousness. *Akusala*, the immoral or unwholesome reaction of mind, is given no place in the Jhānic or reflective spheres of consciousness and religious experience admitting of infinite gradations, thought for convenience sake or scientific purpose these are reduced to sixteen or seventeen successive stages of progress in the life of an aspirant." (*Buddhism as Personal Religion*, page 9).

MRS. RHYS DAVIDS

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dominates Buddhism as a philosophy, the conception of the Way dominates Buddhism as a religion. It is the chief merit of Mrs. Rhys Davids that she has rendered Original Buddhism not only intelligible but practicable by stressing this point, namely, that the Founder taught the spiritual life as essentially a willed process of becoming; not a process of becoming less, but of becoming more. She was fond of saying, in her own picturesque style, that the Buddha saw Man as faring in a More towards a Most. But, like so many who attack an extreme position, she was carried by her enthusiasm to the opposite extreme, and seems to have considered that the view of spiritual life as a becoming less was wholly false. The truth lies, as it so often does, between these two extremes. Adolescence, for example, is not only a process of becoming more adult, but also a process of becoming less a child. Similarly, the spiritual life comprises not only the waxing in of the *Nirvāṇic* trend of becoming but, over and above this, the waning out of the *saṃsāric* trend of becoming. The two are in truth inextricably intertwined. They are as inseparable as the obverse and reverse of a coin, or the two ends of a stick. They may be distinguished in thought, but not separated in practice. But so strong was, and still is, the hold of the Negative on students of Pāli texts that an exaggerated emphasis on the Affirmative was perhaps necessary in order to strike a just balance between them.

In the *Nidāna-Vagga* of the *Samyutta-Nikāya* is found a sutta which Mrs. Rhys Davids (*Kindred Sayings*, Vol. II, page viii) refers to as an "oasis" of Affirmation in the midst of an arid desert of Negation. It clearly exhibits the *Nirvāṇic* trend of becoming as a reaction in a progressive order between factors which complement each other, as essentially a process of positive growth in good, as a cumulative enrichment of the human life-continuum, rather than as a mere counter-process of cessation, a simple waning out of evil or a gradual impoverishment of the human life-continuum. In this important passage, perhaps the sole one of its kind in the Pāli Canon, the Buddha declares that in dependence on suffering arises faith, in dependence on faith arises joy, in dependence on joy arises rapture, in dependence on rapture arises serenity, in dependence on serenity arises happiness, in dependence on happiness arises concentration, in dependence on concentration arises knowledge and vision into things as they really are, in dependence on knowledge and vision into things as they really are arises repulsion, in dependence on repulsion arises passionlessness, in dependence on passionless-

ness arises liberation, in dependence on liberation arises knowledge about the extinction of the intoxicants (*Kindred Sayings*, Vol. II, pp. 25 and 26).

The Buddha illustrates the process of dependent origination or causal association, in the Sansāric as well as the Nibbānic trend of becoming, by a graphic simile :—

“Just as when, brethren, on some hilltop when rain is falling in thick drops, that water, coursing according to slope, fills the hillside clefts and chasms and gullies, these being filled up fill the tarns, these being filled up fill the lakes, these being filled up fill the little rivers, these being filled up fill the great rivers, and the great rivers being filled up fill the sea, the ocean—even so, brethren, there is causal association of activities with ignorance, of consciousness with activities, of name-and-shape with consciousness, of the sixfold sense-sphere with name-and-shape, of contact with the sixfold sense-sphere, of feeling with

contact, of craving with feeling, of grasping with craving, of (renewed) becoming with grasping, of birth with (renewed) becoming, of sorrow with birth, of faith with sorrow, of joy with faith, of rapture with joy, of serenity with rapture, of happiness with serenity, of concentration with happiness, of the knowledge and vision of things as they really are with concentration, of repulsion with the knowledge and vision of things as they really are, of passionlessness with repulsion, of liberation with passionlessness, of knowledge about extinction (of intoxicants) with liberation.” (*Ibid.*, page 27).

Dr. Barua says :—

“Given these two trends within the order of becoming, as discovered by Buddha, and clearly held before us as such, it is up to us all to decide for ourselves which of them to seek and which not. And here lies the scope of the freedom of the Will. Had the Buddha's been simply the Heraclitean

view of change, compelling us to rotate oft and on with the cycle of the opposites, the grand conception of the progressive path of life as outlined by the *Aśtamārga*, better the *Daśa-jñāna*, would have been logically impossible.” (*Buddhism as Personal Religion*, page 9).

The above remarks are sufficient to indicate the inseparable connection between Buddhism as a philosophy and Buddhism as a religion, and to demonstrate the uninterrupted persistence of that connection in the Original Buddhism of the Buddha and the Developed Buddhism of the great Mahāyāna schools led by Nāgārjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu and Asvaghosha. They have moreover shown that Buddhism as a religion is based upon the Nibbānic trend of becoming, and that it is therefore not a merely negative or life-denying creed but a positive, progressive gospel which is capable of satisfying the deepest spiritual needs of modern man.

HOME FOR THE HOMELESS

ISN'T it bewildering sometimes to figure out which is the most deserving cause that needs our help. There are so many of them, but I doubt where there be any one can resist the appeal in the lonely eyes of an orphan child.

We have a fair number of orphanages scattered throughout our Island organised by various religious bodies, and one such is the Buddhist Congress Children's Home at Biyagama—Kelaniya.

I wonder whether any of you dear readers have already heard about it.

This Home was started five years ago in the buildings originally intended for a Buddhist Nunnery.

It is situated close to Colombo away from the bustle and noise, on a little hillock amongst pleasant surroundings.

So far girls have been admitted, and there are twenty-three of them. Their ages ranging from three to sixteen. There is a Matron in charge, and their spiritual welfare is looked after by a bhikkhuni in residence there. I am happy to mention that in 1947, one girl was ordained a bhikkhuni.

She always had that intention.

All the children attend a nearby government school. Their books, clothes and food are provided by the Society. The villagers in the neighbourhood give what help they can in the way of rice,

vegetables, coconuts, etc., for they recognise the value of such a Home.

Not all the children are orphans, for there are many cases where only one parent is dead, and where the other needs a place to leave the child while he or she finds employment. Such a place is a boon to a mother who wants a safe place for her child, while she goes into service, or a father who cannot bring up a motherless daughter.

The aim of the Society is to educate the girls to earn their own living and be useful women.

They will be trained according to their abilities to be teachers, nurses and attendants.

The Committee in charge want to be able to open their doors to all needy children, and they plea to have accommodation for at least a hundred.

Many requests for admission has been turned down for want of funds, accommodation and furniture.

The monthly expenses for twenty-three girls come to Rs. 400/- and funds are urgently needed to carry on the good work, and do it on a larger and better scale.

Any old clothes, crockery, furniture will be of invaluable help. To speak of furniture, aren't our houses over-

crowded? Those extras will always find a place in the Girls' Home.

A visit to the Home by any of you readers will make you realise what a great thing it is to provide such Homes for the Homeless.

A treat-calendar has been organised to give opportunities to the members and the public to give treats to the girls during the course of the year. The idea is to choose a date to fall on ones birthday anniversary, or on a day somebody dear to one has departed, so that a good deed will be done either on their own account or on behalf of a deceased friend or relative. Picnics too can be arranged to give the girls a good time, as they are not fortunate enough to be blessed with many of the good things in life. You have to look at the miserable little girls who are sent by their guardians to beg in the streets to realise how much they need Homes in which they may be placed. Compare their lot with your own fortunate children and add your mite towards giving some motherless girls a choice of a happy Home.

I appeal to those you have not joined us to be members and give their support to work this deserving cause.

May all beings be happy.

CONSTANCE GUNASEKERE,

Joint Secretary.

RIGHT SPEECH

By FRAN ALLEN

• Sabba pāpassa akaranan
(To refrain from all evil)

Kusalassa upasampadā
(To do good)

Sacitta pariyoḍapanan
(To purify the mind :)

Etan Buddhāna sāsanān
(This is the whole of the
Buddhas' Teaching)

—Dhammapada, 183.

LEAST of all can the follower of Lord Buddha afford to neglect Right Speech. Samma Vaca is clearly of primary importance: not only does it form the third step on the Noble Eightfold Path, but also the Fourth Precept. Moreover, it constitutes no less than three of the Ten Points of Good Character—numbers 4, 6 and 7. And to this may be added the Seventh of the Ten Paramitas, for Skillfulness in Teaching must remain impossible without Right Speech.

“Speak the truth; yield not to anger; give, if you are asked; by these three steps you will become divine” we read in Dhammapada (224); though this is but one other of many verses in our Suttas that stress the importance of speech.

Perpetually are thoughts passing through our mind. Some times we put some of those thoughts into words, to speak or write them. The purifying of the mind is largely a matter of the purification of the thoughts in the mind. The habitual use of impure words, of dubbaca, makes this purification impossible whereas, conversely, the practice

of Samma Vaca cultivates a pure mind. Especially is this so when it is remembered that all one's words are not addressed to other human beings, for persons sometimes talk to themselves. And here one perceives the importance of extending Right Speech even to animals. The sensitivity of animals, particularly domesticated ones, makes them quickly aware of the thought behind the word. Animals, like human beings, are susceptible to metta.

What is implied by “Samma” here? There can be for us but one definition: along the whole Eightfold Path RIGHT is that which relieves, or at least does not add to, dukkha. Hence any word which causes pain and suffering in any degree is not Right—and is therefore best left unsaid. A strict control over oneself is required for the exercise of Samma Vaca, and its success entails a certain amount of self-sacrifice.

Above all Right Speech means speaking the truth. In that emotionalism causes exaggeration, unfair discrimination and general inaccuracy of expression, Right Speech is the outcome of Right Thinking.

Every unkind word adds to the sum of Suffering. Better to refrain from speaking than to utter words that are slanderous, hypocritical, idle and flattering, cynical, or critical. To criticise others and to offer unsolicited advice is more than a waste of time; to repeat the faults of others is to advertise one's own short-comings. Therefore, think before you speak!

The direct results of the practice of Samma Vaca are the reliance that experience will teach others to place upon your words, and a degree of mental calm leading to wisdom.

And wisdom is signified more often by silence than by fluent speech. One recalls the number of times upon which Lord Buddha, when questioned or invited to join in some philosophical argument, maintained a noble silence.

Those who strive to develop their personal welfare have to learn to reduce words to a minimum, for Right Speech means less speech. They refrain from gossiping and from discussing food and drink, clothes and cosmetics, soft beds and easy chairs, fine appearances, women and soldiers of fortune, demi-gods, and fortune-telling, hidden treasures, ghost stories, and such like inconsequential tales concerning what might and what might not be.

The welfareer frequents the forest and other solitary places in order, among other things, to avoid the noise of humankind. Words are disturbing and tend to confuse the mind and disorder clear judgment. The power of words was discovered in pre-Buddhist times, and many were the powerful mantras of old.

Silence should be respected. “Silence is golden—only monkeys chatter” runs an ancient Chinese proverb. And in Dhammapada (134) we find: “If, like a shattered gong, thou hast learnt silence, thou hast already reached unto Nibbana for there is no anger within thee.”

CHRISTMAS AND BUDDHISM

(EXCERPTS FROM A SPEECH OF UPASAKA E. PREIBISCH)

THE pagan festival of the Winter solstice, the return of the sun, has been changed into a Christian feast like the Easter and Whitsuntide. The old Aryans, who went to India more than 4,000 years ago, celebrated later the birth of the fire, of the son of the God “Agni” on the 25th of December, when a new star appeared, as wrote: Heinrich Driesmann in his book “Der Mensch der Urzeit” (The man of primeval age”).

During this Agni-feast a carpenter “Twasti” made a holy fire, the divine world-saving child, in a hollow of a wooden

swastika, which was called the womb of the Mother Māyā. Amid singing of the crowd the priest blew up the flame with the holy breeze “Vaju” by a fan to become a great fire and put wine and bread into the fire of which the priests partook a little, also some holy butter for the holy anointment of the Agni to be an “Akka,” an anointed (Greek Christos).

The Agni-feast, which was celebrated later on even in the Greek towns of Asia-Minor, was the source for the Jewish and Christian writers of the Christian Gospel. The Indian myth of

the first Indian Saviour Krishna, as well as of the second Saviour Buddha contributed to the Christian legends. It is told, that the parents of Krishna went to Madura for a census and for paying taxes before his birth in a cow-stall amid shepherds. As the old Romans had no census, this may be regarded as a proof that the writers of the Gospel used the Indian source. Krishna and Buddha were persecuted by kings who feared the new born Saviours. The king Kansa ordered after a bad dream to kill all masculine children which were born on the same day when Krishna was born, like the story of Herodes.*

* Herodes died 4 years before the birth of Christ. Digitized by Noolaham Foundation. aavanaham.org

After the birth of Krishna came the holy hermit Asita from the Himalayas and prophecied: "Your son is born for the welfare of all beings, he will be a Saviour who lights a permanent light for all beings and who will open the strong gates of dark irreligion." In the Christian Gospel we read about Simeon, who could depart in peace, for his eyes saw the Saviour (Luk. 2, 29-32).

The Buddhists may take part in the celebration of Christmas in so-called Christian countries if we recollect its pagan origin and sing new unchristian texts to the songs. The Christmas-tree has its origin in the yule-blocks which are

burnt on the fire-place in Island and England still now and also in the Indian Buddhistic light—and present trees.

The nobleman Luigi Barthema, who went into a temple in Kalikut in India, on the 25th of December, 1503, wrote in his book of travels, which was printed in 1556 in Francfort o.Main: "In this temple are many trees on which hang lights and this feast is celebrated on the 25th of December. A wood-cut shows an idol and a knobby tree on which hang oil-lamps. On the stupa of Barhut in India, which more than 2,000 years old, is seen a relief showing a present-tree with fruits, head-clothes, trinkets, chains and little bells.

There is a connection between the Buddhist Wheel of the Dhamma and the world Yule, the Swedish word hul means wheel. Also the slave word kolede for Christmas is derived from kolo=wheel. Schopenhauer wrote: that Luther had not translated in his bible the Greek words, "ton trochon tes geneseos," i.e. "the wheel of genesis" in the letter of Jacobus. Thus Jacobus must have known Buddhism. Christianity has taken many rituals from Buddhism and in the Gospel we find many phrases taken from Buddhist sources. Psycho-analysts go even deeper and trace back the holy communion to the Totem-meal.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Page 110 of the "Buddhist" for the current month contains an album of personages who received "Honours" on 1st January, 1950. I wonder whether the Editors gave a moment's thought to why they were inflicting this on the readers.

These "honours" or "titles" satisfy only the vanity of the recipients and do no good whatsoever to anyone else. As

a Buddhist, I consider that they set a very bad example to the rest of their fellowmen, in having realised a desire which can only increase man's craving for things of this earth.

The "Buddhist," being the organ of the Y.M.B.A. should really advocate the disappearance of the "Honours" list; but the least it can do is to refrain from giving cheap publicity to these people who feel happy with their added titles, which are meaningless to the average man.

I am one of those rationalists, who would like to see this institution of "Honours" disappear from the future Ceylon. Therefore, please do not insult me by asking me to look upon these people as "heroes."

W. A. de SILVA.

11, Charles Place,
Kollupitiya.
19-1-50.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

Y.M.B.A. FREE NIGHT SCHOOL

THE Headmaster of the Free Night School has submitted his Report for the 3rd term, September to December, 1949. He says:—

We have come to the end of the third term, 1949. During this term we were very busy with the preparation of students for the promotion tests. We also had to work with added effort as we had to stage the first annual concert. The members of the Volley Ball Club had their daily practices with much enthusiasm. The daily attendance was quite satisfactory. Much attention was paid to the students' spoken English. Class speeches in English was on the agenda of the fortnightly meetings of the Sinhalese Literary Union of the school. As usual, the Sinhalese Literary Union showed much interest in its activities during this term. It was a pleasure to see the healthy rivalry that prevailed among the students in debates, etc.

The beginners' class was maintained although there was no teacher to handle its work. The usual members of the staff handled the class in turns.

After the final examinations we found that more than three-fourths of the students in each class fit to be promoted. Of course, our standard of English is quite low, but we hope to raise it gradually. We now have a J.S.C. (English) class. These boys, if found fit, will be sent up for the English J.S.C. examination conducted by the Colombo Teachers' Association. We have six teachers on the staff who are really interested in this form of Social Service.

We are glad to note that the good name of the Night School spread wider this term with the result that not a day passed without an application for admission. But we were forced to reject them for want of accommodation. There are www.dhammadownload.com | [aavanaham.org](http://www.aavanaham.org)

The most outstanding feature of this term was our Variety Entertainment staged on November 5th, 1949. It was a great success. The students and the staff worked very hard to achieve it. Much sense of responsibility and co-operation was shown by our students who really shouldered the burden of this Variety Entertainment. We are grateful to Mr. T. B. Dissanayake, Hony. Manager, of the School for directing us in the right path in all our activities. He was always ready to listen to us patiently in all circumstances. We also thank Sir Ernest de Silva for his patronage and to Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Caldera.

With the dawn of the New Year we hope to give a more practical English education to our students.

"FUTURE OF THE SINHALESE LANGUAGE"

A very interesting lecture in Sinhalese on "The Future of the Sinhalese Language" was given by Bambarande Sri Sivali Thera at the Colombo Y. M. B. A. Hall on January 21.

NEW MEMBERS :—

3.1.50 : H. W. W. De Silva, Maha Buthgamuwa, Angoda ; P. H. Elmis Mendis, Teacher, Government Junior English School, Walasmulla ; Richard Molligoda, 35, Siriya Road, Havelock Town, Colombo 5 ; S. M. Peruman, 11, Fairfield Gardens, Borella, Colombo 8 ; L. S. Perera, Clerk, G.P.O. Branch, M.O.D., Colombo.

10.1.50 : D. W. Padmaperuma, No. 108, Anandagiri, Stafford Place, Colombo ; B. W. Piyadasa, No. 19/6, Dematageda Place, Colombo ; B. M. W. Perera, No. 12, Lane No. 1, Circular Road, Rajagiriya ; V. T. Dickman, Sub-Inspector of Police, Welikada ; D. P. Devendra, No. 8, Kandawatta, Nawala Road, Rajagiriya.

17.1.50 : D. S. Wanasinghe, Gallegedera, Dewalapola, Veyangoda ; K. M. Ahamedmohideen, 37, Dawson Street, Slave Island ; D. S. Wickramasinghe, 103, Avissawella Road, Wellampitiya ; K. D. S. Samarasinghe, Uda Makuruppe, Rikillagaskada ; S. M. D. Shelton Jayatilleke, Sedawatta, Wellampitiya ; T. Sivagnanasunderam, 21, Suvisuddharamaya, Wellawatta, Colombo.

24.1.50 : B. H. William, Managing Director, H.L.R. Bus Co., Ltd., Nugegoda ; M. Gilbert Fonseka, 63, Kent Road, Dematageda, Colombo 9 ; A. Nambiasooran, No. 20, Arbutnott Street, Borella ; Mohamed Ousman Thaha, 131, New Moor Street, Colombo 12 ; T. M. Cassim, No. 11, Sumner Place, Colombo 8.

RESIGNATIONS :—

S. A. Swami.

COLOMBO Y.M.B.A.

The 52nd Annual General Meeting of the Young Men's Buddhist Association, Colombo will be held at the Association Headquarters, Borella, at 3 p.m., on Saturday, February 25th, 1950.

AGENDA

1. Notice convening the meeting.
2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting and the Special General Meeting, of 13th September, 1949.
3. Annual Report and Accounts.
4. Election of Office-bearers.
5. Any other business of which seven days' notice has been given before the meeting in accordance with the Rules.

N.B.—No individual notices will be sent.

ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner of the Association will be held in the Grand Oriental Hotel, Colombo, on Friday, February 24th, 1950, at 8 p.m.

Subscription Rs. 8/- per head.

V. S. NANAYAKKARA,

Hon'y. General Secretary.

February 1, 1950.

RETURN OF THE RED DRAGON

In response to numerous requests, the Colombo Y.M.B.A. Players staged Dick Dias' "Return of the Red Dragon," at the Association Hall on January 29.

In appreciation of the services rendered to the Association, the Committee presented each of the artists with a token gift.

OBITUARY

Mr. E. D. R. Fernando, formerly of Nestle & Anglo-Swiss Milk Products, Ltd.

Mr. J. C. P. Gunawardene, Proctor, brother of Dr. H. C. P. Gunawardene.

NEWS AND NOTES

A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

THE Burmese Prime Minister, Thakin Nu, arrived in Ceylon on January 27, together with several other Burmese notables. He was entertained at "Palm Court," Albert Crescent, Colombo, by the Maha Bodhi Society with whom other leading Buddhist organisations were associated.

Thakin Nu was purely on a pilgrimage. He will take on loan from Ceylon some Buddha Relics. Several prominent Buddhists, including Mr. C. B. Nugawela, Diyawadane Nilame of the Dalada Maligawa, and Mr. Daya Hewavitarme will accompany the Relics to Burma.

THE PARABLE OF THE PLOUGH

SRAMANERA SANGHARAKSHITA

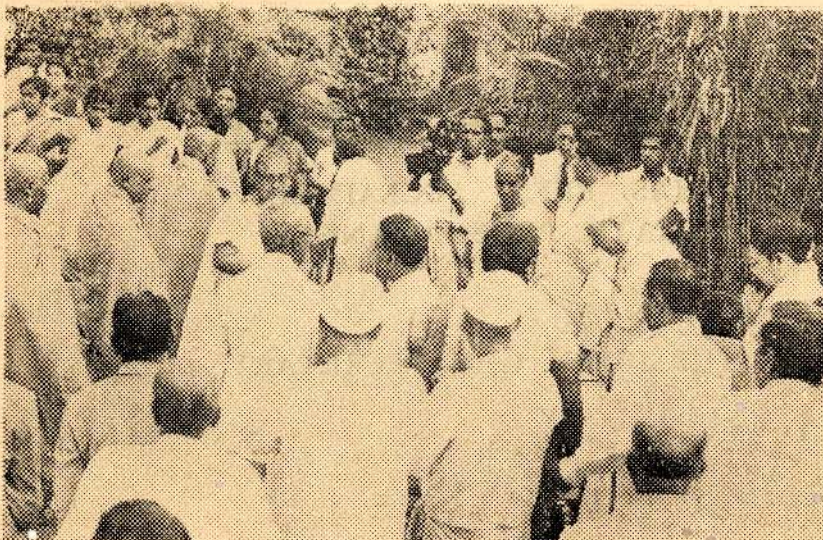
Where green and purple strips of earth
Stretched to far hills of misty blue,
He walked with slow and solemn step
That sanctified the flowers and dew.

The sun shone fiercely white above
And darted down its quivering flame,
As through the new-ploughed fields the
Lord
Of Wisdom and Compassion came.

Two milk-white oxen drew the plough
With meek, bowed heads that seemed to
hear
The sighful rustle of the palms
And the dry clods breaking in their rear.

The peasant drove the ploughshare deep,
Which two strong hands did strictly
guide.
Lo, as he turned his docile team,
The silent Lord was at his side.

He knelt with joined, uplifted palms ;
His eyes with tears of joy were dim.
And while he knelt, his oxen seemed
To bow their patient heads with him.



Thakin Nu (at right) Burma's Prime Minister now in Ceylon, pays obeisance as Buddhist monks file in to greet him at the joint reception accorded him by the Maha Bodhi Society, at "Palm Court." Behind the Buddha Shrine Foundation.

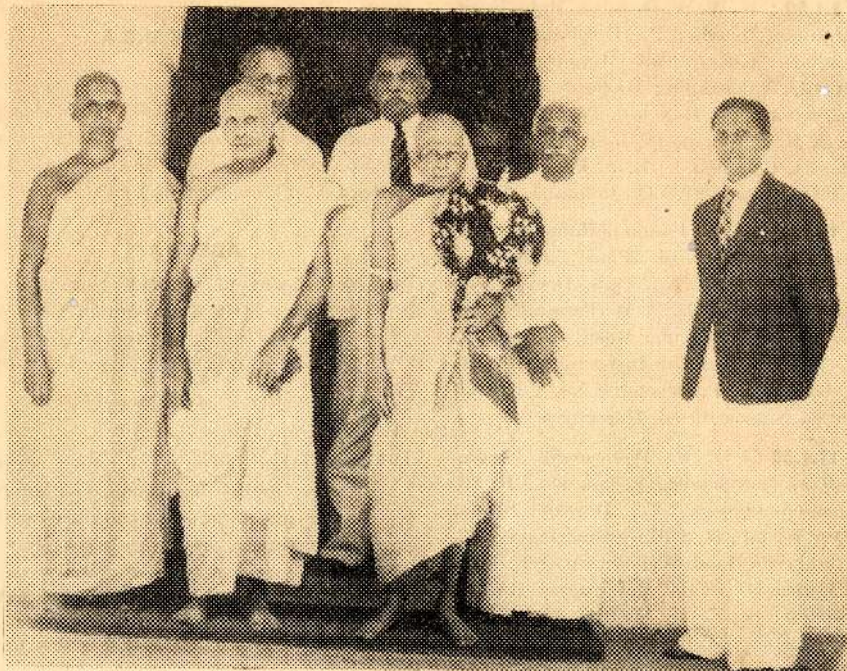
The Lord in mercy sweetly spake—
No hour for high discourses now ;
He spoke of simple, homely things,
And parabled upon the plough.

By that so gracious accent, all
The humble ways of field and fold—
Ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing,
Were touched as though with rays of
gold.

Yea, as the Lord discoursed to him,
The hardy peasant quickly saw
In lives of clod, flower, beast and man,
The workings of a common law.

Three milk-white blooms the peasant
plucked
And with them touched the Blessed Feet.
“ I take my refuge, Lord, in Thee,
Thy Doctrine, and Thine Order meet.”

The Lord stepped o'er the thread-thin
stream
And went His calm and solemn way.
The ploughman, joyful, gripped his
plough,
And plied a whip of song that day.



After the ceremony at the Malwatte Vihare where the office of Pradhana Nayaka of South Ceylon was conferred on the Ven. Baddegama Piyaratana, Principal of Vidyodaya Pirivena (second from left). Behind are the Chief Justice, Sir Arthur Wijeyewardene, and the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake, who were honorary participants.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. HALL

**OUR NEW HALL HAS BEEN ACCLAIMED
THE BEST FOR DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES.**

For Particulars apply to :

THE HONY. GEN. SECRETARY.